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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIEV 002359

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/16/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SOCI](#) [MARR](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: ORANGE-BLUE COALITION TALKS ALLEGEDLY
MOVING QUICKLY

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) A coalition agreement between the Party of Regions and Our Ukraine (OU) could be reached tonight (June 16), according to Regions MP and de facto shadow foreign minister Leonid Kozhara. In a conversation with DCM, Kozhara dismissed OU's public distinction between "consultations" and "negotiations" as semantics; the two sides were at the bargaining table and "had more in common than differences." Kozhara dismissed press speculation about key Orange-Blue coalition government positions having already been filled; once a coalition deal was sealed, the two sides would agree on Rada committee structure, and then Regions leader Yanukovych would work out the top job assignments with President Yushchenko. Kozhara said the coalition agreement text addressed Ukrainian cooperation with NATO and referred to the status of the Russian language in terms of the Ukrainian constitution. Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) MP Hryhoriy Nemirya told us separately Yushchenko and Tymoshenko met the afternoon of June 16 following a meeting that morning where BYuT and the Socialists rejected OU's offer to join a grand coalition. Earlier, Yuliya Tymoshenko and her MPs had voted June 15 on next steps; the "overwhelming majority" wanted to continue efforts to form an Orange coalition until June 24 (when the president was empowered to call new elections if he chose to), and only then go into opposition. Citing an unpublished NGO Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF) poll, Nemirya claimed the majority of respondents still wanted an Orange coalition. The DIF's director, though, told us the poll only showed that public support for Yushchenko was weakening in western Ukraine -- which would help BYuT if new elections were called. As of 1800, OU's political council was meeting; OU's point man in the coalition formation effort, Roman Bezsmertny, pledged to call DCM with a readout. In a conversation with Ambassador on the evening of June 16, Foreign Minister Tarasyuk said he expected a coalition decision on Monday, June 19. End summary.

Regions: Coalition Agreement Maybe Tonight...

2. (C) Party of Regions MP Leonid Kozhara, who serves as the party's de facto shadow foreign minister, told us on the afternoon of June 16 that Regions could finish a coalition agreement with Our Ukraine (OU) by as early as tonight (June 16). Kozhara dismissed OU's distinction between "consultations" and "negotiations" as semantics (reftel); the two sides were at the bargaining table and "had more in common than differences." Kozhara, who left the talks to take our call, predicted that once the two sides finished the coalition agreement, they would quickly move on to discuss Rada committees and filling key government positions. (Note: In a conversation with Ambassador on the evening of June 16, Foreign Minister Tarasyuk said he expected a coalition

decision on Monday, June 19. Tarasyuk emphasized that OU was negotiating with its Orange partners as well as with Regions; neither option had been closed off.)

...The Viktors Alone Will Make Key Assignments...

13. (C) Responding to a question about a June 16 Ukrainska Pravda article that, quoting "sources," went into great detail about who would do what in an Orange-Blue coalition government, Kozhara attributed the article to leaks from working-level MPs who were holding preliminary personnel discussions. Kozhara emphasized that key position assignments would be worked out "at the top": directly between Regions leader Viktor Yanukovych and President Yushchenko.

...And NATO Membership Decided Via Referendum

14. (C) Pressed for details on the contents of the coalition agreement, Kozhara said that the language on NATO was concise: Ukraine would develop "productive, cooperative relations" with NATO, and membership in the alliance would be decided via a referendum. Kozhara refused to be drawn out on the question of Russian being made the second State language, simply noting that, on this issue, the coalition agreement text was "in line with the Constitution" and contained no formula for granting "official status" for Russian.

Tymoshenko Bloc: Still Doing CPR On Team Orange...

15. (C) Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) MP and Tymoshenko foreign

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policy guru Hryhoriy Nemirya told us June 16 that Yushchenko and Tymoshenko met in the late afternoon of June 16. In the morning of the same day, the Orange troika had met at the Rada, with Tymoshenko and Oleksandr Turchynov representing BYuT, Oleksandr Moroz and Yosef Vinsky representing the Socialist Party (SP), and Roman Bezsmertny and Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov from OU. The talks, Nemirya said, went nowhere; Bezsmertny and Yekhanurov had urged BYuT and the SP to join OU and Regions in a grand coalition, a proposition that Tymoshenko immediately rejected and Moroz rejected after consulting with the Socialist Party's political council. The troika agreed, though, to meet again on June 17. Nemirya said OU and Regions were, in fact, at the negotiating table; OU was being led by oligarch Petro Poroshenko, and Regions by MPs Mykola Azarov and Raisa Bohatyrova.

...BYuT Troops Solidly With Yuliya..

16. (C) Nemirya related that BYuT gathered its 129 MPs on June 15 to vote on what to do next. The BYuT troops were offered three options by Tymoshenko: join a grand coalition with OU and Regions, immediately go into opposition, or continue talks about forming an Orange coalition until June 24 (when the president will have the constitutional authority can call new elections but is not required to do so) and then, if need be, go into opposition. According to Nemirya, there were "zero" votes for joining a grand coalition, 36 votes for going into opposition, and an "overwhelming majority" for continuing to find a way to make an Orange coalition happen.

17. (SBU) Nemirya, citing an unpublished poll by the respected NGO Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), claimed that the majority of the Ukrainian people still wanted an Orange coalition. However, we spoke with DIF Director Ilko Kucheriv, a trusted Embassy interlocutor, who told us that the poll Nemirya apparently referred to did not contain any questions about an Orange coalition. It did ask people how they would vote if new parliamentary elections were held; the poll indicated that the results would be roughly the same,

although media speculation about an OU-Regions coalition was eating into support for Yushchenko in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk oblasts -- good news for BYuT, Kucheriv said.

...And OU: We'll Call You

18. (SBU) As of 1800, OU's political council was meeting; Bezsmertny pledged to call DCM with a readout when the leadership huddle ended. Separately, Bezsmertny's longtime aide confirmed to us that MPs Petro Poroshenko and Roman Zvarych were representing OU in the talks with Regions. Bezsmertny and Yekhanurov were the designated Tymoshenko-Moroz interlocutors for OU.

Comment: Possible Curtain Calls to This Drama

19. (C) Comment: The June 24 deadline that Nemirya referred to in paragraph 6 only gives the president the constitutional authority to call new elections. Yushchenko is not required to dismiss the Rada, and has said publicly that he will not call new elections. The bottom line: the twists and turns in this saga could continue beyond June 24.
Taylor